



March 7, 2025

Navajo Department of Health
Public Health Advisory Notice
Hantavirus

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Navajo Nation reports the first Hantavirus case fatality of 2025. The Navajo Department of Health, in coordination with the Navajo Epidemiology Center and public health partners, issued a Public Health Advisory Notice to caution the Navajo public about Hantavirus disease (also known as Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome or HPS).

HPS is a rare disease but can be fatal. Individuals can become infected through exposure to rodent droppings. Hantavirus is transmitted to people that come into contact with or breathe in infected rodent droppings, urine, or saliva. It is important to take appropriate precautions when entering and cleaning sheds, garages, campers, cabins, barns, and other buildings. Check your surroundings for rodent droppings.

Symptoms of hantavirus infection can be much like COVID-19 or flu, and only a medical exam and laboratory tests can determine the difference. Symptoms usually start to show 1 to 8 weeks after contact with an infected rodent.

SYMPTOMS:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Fever
- Muscle aches, especially in the large muscle groups like the thighs, hips, back, and sometimes shoulders
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Chills
- Abdominal problems, like nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain

PREVENTION:

- Beware of signs of rodent activity (i.e., droppings, nests, etc.).
- Open all doors and windows for 30 minutes to air out before entering a shed, barn, garage, etc.
- Do not stir up dust by vacuuming, sweeping, or by any other means when cleaning up rodent droppings.
- When rodent droppings or nests are found, spray them with a household disinfectant (i.e., bleach) and allow them to soak for at least 15 minutes. A disinfectant solution can be made by mixing 1 cup of bleach with one gallon of water.
- After disinfecting, wear rubber gloves and clean up the droppings with disposable materials such as paper towels or disposable mop heads.

- Place droppings or nests in double plastic bags and dispose of them in the trash.
- Prevent rodents from entering the home by plugging or sealing up holes and gaps.
- Eliminate or reduce rodent activity around the home by removing outdoor junk and clutter.
- Do not make food readily available to rodents. Store food in containers with tight-fitting lids (i.e., Tupperware). Do not leave pet food in pet dishes. Dispose of garbage in trash cans with tight-fitting lids.

For more information about hantavirus prevention, call the Navajo Epidemiology Center at 928-871-6539 or visit the following websites:

1. <https://nec.navajo-nsn.gov/Projects-Reports/Infectious-Disease>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/hantavirus>